

Scorchers SPEAK OUT

MADE IN U.S.A.

During the recent snowy months, I had the chance to spend time talking with Scorchers' Jason Warner and Jeff about their career--the ups and downs of the past and the promise of the future. I had three incredible conversations and came away with what has to be THE Scorchers story. The following is the first of three parts that we will print revealing what the Scorchers themselves deem to be the essence of their story. Many people in Nashville seem to be of the opinion that the band is some sort of overnight success; however, like any successful band the reality is more like over 1095 nights--the three year rise of the Scorchers is built upon a lot of hard work and dedication and like lead singer Jason said, this interview finally offers them the chance to tell Nashville just what that means. The first part of this interview will deal with the history of the band, especially the band that not many people remember and will reveal the story of how the present band came to be.

Jason came to Nashville in the summer of '81 and met Jack Emerson at Springwater on the 4th of July during the last big bash of the band NO ART. They proceeded to put a band together with Will Tomlin, a Vandy Law student on guitar and Barry Feltz, former singer of NO ART on drums. JASON: The best thing about that Scorchers was the sheer nerve of it... 'cause none of us could really play. We had a lot of fun in that band... and I'll always have fond memories of it... it was a completely wide open experience--me and Jack just felt like the horizon was limitless--that band did three gigs--with REM, with Carl Perkins at Vandy and with the WRONG BAND.

Q: What exactly happened to dissolve that band? J: Basically... I wanted to put the band on the road and really go for it--that's why I came to town--Jack and Will couldn't do that 'cause they were in school--Barry thought about it--for a while me and Barry toyed with the idea of building up something with whoever else--Jack stayed involved with everything that went on, though he wasn't called a manager--he was involved with everything at the beginning; it's sort of like 2 men's visions came together at the same time; Jack had some vision about... the music business and I had some ideas about how to do some music and, uh, the 2 rivers kind of came together. We couldn't find anybody to play bass or guitar--and at this time I started hanging out with Jeff playing a little now and then, and, uh, he first auditioned as a guitar player with Jack playing bass and that didn't really work out so good. Q: Was Jeff too much of a punk guitarist for what you wanted?

J: The chemistry just wasn't right at the time--uh, Jeff was, at that time in his life I don't think he was into playing the kind of guitar we needed... we were looking for sort of a clean--sort of a country sound--uh, Jeff wasn't into that. But we had a lot of fun the night he tried out--we did a great version of "Great Balls of Fire" and I'll remember the solo he played on that for the rest of my life--it was brilliant--I never will forget what that solo did for me 'cause I saw in that one minute, see, Jeff couldn't get the chords right but when he tore up on that solo... it was pure rock'n'roll... the whole room went crazy... that to me is still the definitive guitar solo... anyway, we stayed in touch--there were no hard feelings, we said let's try something else youknow, and, uh, I just threw my arms up in the air and I said to him one day on the phone, 'hey I can't find anyone to play the kind of thing we're into' and he said well heck, let me play bass and he started playing bass and he worked great, it was Barry on drums and him on bass and this was in early Sept/Oct. '81 and... he did real well he got a standup... and was playing standup and electric as well--so we worked as a 3 piece for a while, with me on guitar (laughs) --it was an experience 'cause I'm not the worlds greatest--and, uh, we got something tight that way--we at least could practice and Preston played with us for a while, but we could never make that work, at least chemistrywise--it should have worked--but it didn't.

Let's take a jump here to a different night and another place to get Jeff's version of the story.

by rick champion

Q: What made you want to play bass with the Scorchers seeing as how you are the definitive punk guitarist--it was a bit of a departure? JEFF: Yeah, I don't know--it's just that I saw--I walked into Cantrell's one night, Jason was playing with his other band--they played some, uh rockabilly song and I went into the bar and came back and they were playing the craziest version of Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone" I'd ever heard--and he was kind of bouncing off the walls and something hit me right there--I knew the band was going to break up because of school and jobs people had and all that and I thought, yeah, I'll give this a try so I tried for guitar at first but it just didn't, the stuff that I was playing just didn't really fit. youknow, what he was looking for and what they had conceived in their minds the sound should be--so I said 'what the hell, I'll play bass, youknow, and I've been doing it ever since. (More on this later)

Now, back to the discussion with Jason and just how Warner came to fill the guitar spot. JASON: Gradually, the talk started happening around Warner Hodges--uh, Barry said he would quit if Warner joined and one night, kind of on the sly Warner came up to my house and we jammed a little bit and went out to a club and the minute we went in, Barry Feltz was sitting right there and he knew right away that I was thinking about using Warner and he actually did stay with it for about a month--in fact he stayed until the Praxis release (NEVER IN NASHVILLE) party when NO ART got back together... and he, uh, kind of got back into the lead singer kind of thing and wanted to do that--I'll never fault Barry for that and to this day I'm still his friend--there's no hard feelings at all, we just couldn't resolve the conflicts between Warner and Jeff and Barry--I tried so hard but there was no way--too many years of bad experiences--Barry just dropped out eventually and that opened the door for Warner to bring in another drummer--Warner knew a lot of drummers and he said Perry would probably work the best and we tried Perry and it was, youknow, heaven from the get go. The band as it is now did our first gig Jan. 1 of '82... We went into the studio after that and did the RECKLESS COUNTRY SOUL EP on a 4-track--well actually we did that in late December and we released RCS right after that first gig and started doing what I wanted to do with the very first band which was go out into the clubs, anywhere that'd play us--at the time the club scene was healthy and they still would like hire new bands and give them... low guaranties, but we could go out and--on that first tour we did like 2 weeks worth of dates and made about \$100 a night--but we made enough to get by--the rest is public knowledge--we just kept digging and digging and the snowball kept rolling along, youknow.

Once again, let's take a jump in time and go to another snowy night and the discussion with Warner about how he got involved with the Scorchers. Q: What exactly drew you to play with the Scorchers coming from where you had been and coming off playing with the PRESS?

WARNER: (laughs) you remember that band too; I saw the Scorchers when they opened for Carl Perkins, and I remember just seeing Jason and thinking 'My god, the guy has incredible energy'--but he was doing everything himself... and when I found out he was looking for a guitar player, youknow, the stuff he was playing was all stuff I'd played with my parents, and had been raised playing--I wasn't playing with anybody and Jeff was playing and I said I'd just as soon play with Jason and I ain't got nothing to do--honestly, when I started playing with the Scorchers, it was like I was going to play with them until I found a "real band" to get into but, uh, I guess that's why I first played with them, youknow, I thought Jason was real energetic and that drew me to the band, that and the fact I knew that I could play the stuff... and I'd be playing with my friend Jeff.

Q: Ok, coming from a country background, and playing that kind of stuff, were you drawn to the Scorchers with the attitude of taking country music and "doing something" to it?

W: Initially no... initially when I went into it I was by far the least creative member of the band--I was just too busy having a good time youknow, and honest to god the first six months of the band I was just going to play and have fun until I could find that "real band" to be in--but then as things changed, it became that kind of thing, it was,

Q: Ok, what kind of things happened to change that? W: Things started happening with the band, youknow, uh, the press was happening, we did the little record--the 45--some decent things were happening--the press was really good, people were interested in the band and I just never found that "real band" to get into and the Scorchers became that band... it's like things were going well and I wasn't doing anything except showing up and playing and I started thinking if I made an effort and Perry made an effort and Jeff made an effort, 'cause Jason was putting everything he had into the band and if everybody made an effort then it might really do something--and it just blossomed, it just always got bigger and that other real band never came along and if it would now, well it's just too late (laughs).

That completes the first part of this interview with the Scorchers. In our next issue we'll focus in on Jason's personal attitude towards why he came to Nashville and the inner feelings of a man who feels destined to be leading Nashville's top rock'n'roll band towards what he and the rest of the band feel to be a bright future. I'd like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Jason, Warner and Jeff for their time and to the people over at Praxis who were so helpful in setting up our interview. In our final chapter of the Jason story, we'll zero in on the new album (which is reviewed in this issue) and focus on the producing skills and attitudes of Warner and Jeff and also that ever lurking question about how the Scorchers feel towards Nashville and when will they be coming home to play again.



Jason & The Scorchers

LOST AND FOUND

(EMI/America)

Although the rest of the world only became acquainted with Jason & The Scorchers through the EMI re-release of FERVOR last year, here in the "Music City", we've known it all along: the Scorchers are HOT!; we've waited almost two years since that Praxis issue for a full-fledged Scorchers' LP, and now, with LOST AND FOUND, a red-hot, hell-broth of a rock and roll album, we see that the wait was more than worth it...

"Last Time Around" kicks off the festivities, a rolling and rollicking number that combines a wicked guitar line with a solid rhythm and tasty harmonies to push a "love-is-lost" type song past our ears and into our hearts; then, quickly jumping into "White Lies", the initial single release and a sounds-great-on-the-radio raver with a hook that would wound even a wild Pakistani bull elephant. Co-written by Scorchers' drummer Perry Baggs and a friend, Larry Napier, it illustrates a heretofore unknown songwriting talent in the band (in fact, the tunesmithing chores are pretty evenly divided among the entire band on LOST AND FOUND).

"If Money Talks", another Baggs/Napier composition follows, a witty and well-timed reminder of the economic state of the nation. The band then spices up a country standard, "I Really Don't Want To Know" in their own unique manner in this remake of the Eddy Arnold hit. The side closes with two originals penned by vocalist Jason Ringenberg, the country-flavored "Blanket Of Sorrow" and "Shop It Around". Both are melodic, hook-ridden rockers that showcase the Scorchers' talent at blending street-level rock, Southern soul and gospel energy into a fresh and interesting hybrid.

Ol' Hank himself would grin with a sense of pride at the way the boys cover his "Lost Highway", another well-aged standard from the days when Ma Williams' boy was rolling across a thousand miles of blacktop, kicking up a dust storm from the deep-blue Atlantic to the warm Pacific coast, the years that still saw "and Western" tagged behind the "Country" in Country music. Another Jason original follows, the slow, wandering "Still Tied", a tune showcasing Jason's fluid vocals and populist songwriting skills and a possible contender as this year's ballad of the working man.

"Broken Whiskey Glass", from the rare first Scorchers' recording, the RECKLESS COUNTRY SOUL EP, is remade here with an additional verse and a slightly varied instrumental track. The story of the futile love of a jaded honky tonk queen, this new version rivals the energetic and enjoyable original (a personal favorite). "Far Behind" follows, co-written by Perry Baggs and bass player

CONT. ON P. 2

Scorchers

REGIONAL

Record Round-up

andy

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CONT. FROM P. 1

Jeff Johnson features the legendary Kenny Lovelace on fiddle and is an excellent bid for country airplay.

Ending the album on an upbeat tempo is "Change The Tune", a patented good time number guaranteed to produce a rapid pulse and an increased heartbeat in the fortunate listener. A lyrical call to arms for a new direction in rock music, this one defines the word (and the band's name) "scorchers".

Terry Manning's production on LOST AND FOUND suits the band's music. With additional direction provided by Jeff Johnson and guitarist Warner Hodges, Manning (best known for his work with ZZ Top and George Thorogood) has created a powerful, raw-edged sound more akin to a deadly broadsword than a blunt bludgeon.

LOST AND FOUND, needless to say, is not without flaws, which is to be expected from any young band. Although the Johnson/Baggs rhythm section is solid, never flamboyant, providing a firm foundation for the material, Jason's songwriting skills, considerable as they may be, at times lapse into clichés during the uncontrollable heat and energy of the song (i.e. the metaphorical "your soul is an icebox" from "Blanket Of Sorrow"). Warner Hodges guitar-work has matured incredibly since FERVOR, becoming more fluid and stylistic, at times harkening back to the best work of Keith Richards' prime; other times, though, the pseudo-metallic clanging of the guitar-line literally cries out to be toned down, endangering the careful mix of the vocals and background rhythm.

These faults are few, however, and only slightly noticable. Experience and maturity will cure these ills, which can be had only through time. As it now rests, LOST AND FOUND is an exciting debut album, marking the well-deserved "break out" of a rare combination of four individuals and their considerable talents. Of the many strongly independent bands creating a fresh sound in rock music, Nashville's own Jason & The Scorchers are among those in the forefront of a new generation of American artists, a band with great promise and an even greater future.

WRITTEN BY KEITH A. GORDON

Here's my roundup of new local and regional releases:

SHADOW 15- 8 Song Cassette- Debut release from one of Nashville's brightest bands, this tape was recorded last year and had been circulating privately to raves. Shadow 15 have recently released it to the public (in an eye-catching package), and I for one couldn't be happier. This recording is very good, both in terms of sound quality and in being able to translate the best parts of Shadow 15's raw live sound onto tape. The best description of what Shadow 15 play that I've come up with is garage rock with psychedelic undercurrents, and they play tight and fast. Barry on bass and drummer Chris provide a solid reference point which Shannon's guitar rips in and out of. Scott's vocals, frequently drowned out live, are right up front here and add the proper amounts of urgency and/or despair to the songs (I should also praise Chris for his excellent backing vocals on several of the songs). All in all, this is an excellent from an original and talented bunch that delivers what's expected and promises better things to come. Highly recommended.

PRACTICAL STYLISTS- 3 Song Cassette- Everybody knows Practical Stylisists were one of this city's best loved pop bands until their breakup last Fall, but some of you may have missed this, their final release in what was a short and colorful recording career. These tunes were recorded in June '84, without any thought of public release, as demos for the band. After the breakup, a decision was made to issue them via cassette, and here we are. These are the only Stylisists' recordings to feature the guitars and influence of Bill Lloyd and John Jackson, and while the mix and sound quality aren't dynamic, the songs and strong playing make this a must own. The songs here are Scott's ultra-catchy "With Me Now", "The Big Time" (a live favorite), and Bill's classic "A Day Without You (Is Like A Day Without You)" on which he sings lead. Available for \$2.50 from PYRAMID RECORDS, P.O. Box 23506, Nashville, TN 37202.

GUADALCANAL DIARY- Talking In The Shadow Of The Big Man (on CD)- One of the very best albums I've heard. Guadalcanal Diary are from Marietta, GA (near Atlanta) and have a sound and musical approach all their own. Together over 2 years now, they've played and drawn raves throughout the land and have been frequent players in Nashville (including an appearance at last year's Alternative Jam). Their first EP, *Latent*, had 4 songs, none of which sounded at all alike. The 10 songs of this Don Dixon-produced CD continue to show their varied approach, but it's a little more spot some categorization: (1) have no rockers with a hint of country- "Trail Of Tears", "Ghost On The Road", & "Latent Rodeo" all feature guitars and voices that blaze. (2) Instrumentals- The title track is a sure thing, and "Take The Wheel" is as fun as it sounds. (3) Scatting tunes with a Southern and religious influence- "Sinner" and "Why Do

The Heathen Rage", & "Fire From Heaven". Then there's "Pillow Talk", so good I thought it was a Buddy Holly tune when I first heard it, and an uplifting version of that campfire staple "Kumbya". Tying everything together is Guadalcanal Diary's energy and enthusiasm. Buy this album, you will not be disappointed.

NOW EXPLOSION- "Nappy"/"Stuff"- The Now Explosion are from Atlanta and come across as a poor copy of the beloved B-52's. They've played here on occasion, and their silly stage show and tacky clothes are lots of fun, but that can't help this turkey of a single. The music is fake funk, the lyrics downright awful, and the production sucks. A must to avoid, don't be fooled by the nifty sleeve. (\$2.50 from Funtone USA, Box 54472, Atlanta, GA 30308)

CLUB GAGA- "Deseo Tu"/"Aunt Bea's Wig"- This gets my vote for best single out of Athens, GA since Pylon broke up. Club Gaga are a five guy, one gal band who lay down some amazing wigged out slabs of music. "Deseo Tu" features Dayna's soaring voice singing about love and hate, cheesey organ, and a male chorus shouting the title over a very danceable beat. The flip is a minor masterpiece revolving around Aunt Bea from Mayberry, R.F.D. and her new wig; sample lyrics: "Cokie wants to wear it/Cookie wants to pump it/Everybody Hates it/Everybody likes Aunt Bea's wig". Club Gaga have a feel for solid happy tunes and I for one would love to see them live. By Rick hit of the month, get it from 663 N. Milledge Avenue, Athens, GA 30601 for \$2.50.

KILKENNY CATS- "Attractive Figure"/"Of Talk"- The local faves in Athens currently, the Kilkenny Cats look to break out nationally with this first single on the New Jersey Coyote label. "Attractive Figure" is a pure burst of energy, fast and robust with lots of hooks and coy vocals from Tom Cheek. Not much substance, but a very catchy tune. The flip, alas, is a slow tune that sounds a bit too R.E.M.-ian for my tastes, but it isn't a total washout. This band is a lot of fun live, so I'm hoping their future releases will show more of a spark. Worth giving a listen too and available from COYOTE RECORDS, Box 112 Uttown, Hoboken, NJ 07030.

STD- 4 Song EP- The members of STD are obviously bored and filled with anger at living in Knoxville, so they formed a punk group a while back, played all around the South, and now have their own record out. There's nothing musically new here, and the band have a few too many self-indulgent metalistic tendencies to be considered hardcore. Their lyrics are about what you'd expect, but two tunes stand out: "Skateboards Suck" (the title says it all) and "Surf and Kill", a song with sledgehammer guitar and epic plot about Johnny, Farrah Ann, and the Hell's Angels Surf Patrol. 2 out of 4 isn't a good average, but you might want to check it out since it's only \$2 from 2508 Grasham Lane, Knoxville, TN 37920.

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HI THERE!!! Andy Anderson here with the latest in-
 stantment in LOCAL NEWS. I should explain from the
 outset that I am back in town and am working with
 the N.I.R. once again, hence this column of Local
 News and my other contributions throughout the
 paper. And it's good to be back! Anyway, since I
 have been out of town for quite a while what follows
 is not as complete as I would like, so bear with me
 this time and don't get mad. Oh, I should mention
 at this time that if you or your band has info for
 N.I.R.'s LOCAL NEWS, please send it to us so we can
 make this column as complete and up to date as is
 humanly possible. And now, LOCAL NEWS:

BIG LEADOFF ITEM is that ALTERNATIVE JAM 5 was a
 smashing success, lasting over 5 hours, and showcasing
 eight of Nashville's greatest bands. Despite
 the bitter cold and snow on the ground, a crowd of
 about 550 flowed through Cantrell's on Feb. 2 to see
 scheduled acts SHADOW 15, THE MOVEMENT, and RAGING
 FIRE. After that, the "Jam" began, and five bands
 from each of the previous Alternative Jams took the
 stage to the crowd's delight. CLOVERBETCH, C.P.S.,
 FACTUAL, BASIC STATIC, and JASON AND THE SCORCHERS
 all turned in stunning performances. And what have
 all of those bands been doing since then? Well,
 BASIC STATIC and C.P.S. are still defunct, but
 back from the grave once more is CLOVERBETCH who
 will be playing a gig at 12th & Porter on April 19.
 These guys proved they could still deliver the goods
 at the Alternative Jam, so mark this date on your
 calendar. SHADOW 15 have just released an 8-song
 cassette tape that is very good and is reviewed
 elsewhere in this issue. THE MOVEMENT, who went
 over quite well with the crowd at the Jam, they have
 just released a promotional single which is not
 available to the public, but which is being played
 on 91 ROCK. Don't despair, though, the band is
 reported working on a 4-song EP and hope to have it
 in your hands by the end of April. THE MOVEMENT
 also will be playing Vandy's Good Women later this
 month... RAGING FIRE have been busy, busy, busy
 putting the finishing touches on their 4-song EP
 which we can look forward to hearing by late March
 or early April. Titled A Family Thing, the EP will
 also include "Four Tears (Church Street)", "You
 Should Read More Books", and "Beware Of A Man Of
 Manners" (which we understand is dedicated to Jerry
 Lee Lewis). Following the EP's release, the band
 plan several live shows here in Nashville before
 hitting the road... JASON AND THE SCORCHERS new
 LP Lost And Found is out and in the stores and
 waiting for you to buy it. It's great! The band
 celebrated with a signing party at CATS March 9 and
 the place was packed. Wonder of wonders, WKDA is
 giving "White Lies" heavy airplay, and the band did
 an on-air interview March 11 which was quite a sur-
 prise. Enjoy their presence in town while it lasts,
 the SCORCHERS will be hitting the road any day now.
 They did shoot a video in Texas, so let's hope MTV
 will select them before our eyes... FACTUAL would
 like you to think they're not doing anything, but
 in reality they're making slow progress on their
 new album as they're having to redesign their studio
 as they go along...

Speaking of FACTUAL, Rob Earls' old friends from
 his days as a member of the ACTUALS, Steve Anderson
 and Gary Rebasca, otherwise known as ACTUEL have
 returned to town. Friday, March 15th at Cantrell's
 ACTUEL will celebrate the U.S. release of their
Monuments LP which has previously only been avail-
 able on the D.B.S. Dutch label. Joining ACTUEL, who
 have not played here in quite a while will be IN
 PURSUIT whose 3 song 7" EP is now available in local
 record stores. IN PURSUIT is currently at work on
 a 12" mini-LP. Joining ACTUEL and IN PURSUIT will
 be BILL LLOYD, so be sure to be there early...

We're sad to report that CIVIC DUTY has broken up
 following last month's 12th & Porter gig. No word
 on what, if anything, Ed & Judy will be doing, but
 they did want to thank all their fans for their
 support over the years... Also calling it quits were
 Athens, GA's CH-OK, so this winter has really taken
 its toll... But not on SUBURBAN BAROQUE who stayed
 warm inside and have been working on film, video,
 record, and all sorts of other projects... DIM is
 not dead, they're just waiting for their guitarist
 Eddie to return from England. So, look for them
 again in a few months... the PAPER DOLLS' Donna and
 JoAnn are leaving to do something more serious, and
 tell us to look for something in about a month. The
 other PAPER DOLLS continue on...

AND THAT'S IT for this month's LOCAL NEWS. Look for
 more reports of Nashville's sceneries for the hip
 and well read in the next N.I.R., which we promise,
 promise, promise, will be out sooner than this one
 was. TAKE CARE!



SHADOW 15

8 song cassette - \$4.87
Available at CAT'S

(The Rejected), they live in a deserted
 suburban housing project, a wasteland
 complete with wild dogs and rats; they
 fills their days with teevie, panhandling
 and pillaging; at night they frequent the
 seedily East L.A. hard-core clubs. The film
 feature live stage performances from DI,
 The Vandals and T.S.O.L. Alex Gibson's

COVER ART

MOVIE REVIEWS

NIGHT OF THE COMET

A hilarious and satirical dark
 comedy/sci-fi thriller about the end of
 the world and the few survivors...
 including a teenaged "Valley Girl", her
 older sister and a Chicano truck driver.
 A mysterious comet has reduced all who
 have turned out to see it into a fine
 red dust. Partial exposure only delays
 the process, turning people into flesh-
 eating ghouls before the final trans-
 formation into fill-dirt. The handful
 of those who received protection by
 accidently being shielded by steel are
 left to deal with the mess. The humour
 is wry, mostly subtle, though with a
 few sight gags thrown in. Interesting
 sub-plots include a quartet of punk
 zombies who capture the sisters in a
 department store ("We believe in the
 system," says the delightfully manic
 punk leader, Willy, "just two days ago
 we were mere stockboys... now we own the
 whole damn store!"), and a partially-
 exposed group of think-tank scientists
 in the desert outside of Los Angeles.
 An enjoyable, funny tour de farce, you'll
 probably find NIGHT OF THE COMET ON cable
 teevie or on your local video-rental
 shelves soon.

Another 1984 cult favorite, SUBURBIA
 is a real find for dedicated followers of
 hard-core. Written and directed by the
 woman who brought us THE DECLINE OF WEST-
 ERN CIVILIZATION (a documentary of the
 West Coast hard-core scene featuring X,
 Fear and Black Flag), Penelope Spheeris,
 SUBURBIA is the best "teenagers-in-revolt
 film since REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE. By
 utilizing the talents of a group of real-
 life punks in the lead roles, Spheeris
 manages to create an authenticity most
 directors only dream of. ("I can't turn
 actors into punks," she said in a recent
 interview, "but I can turn punks into
 actors.") The story of a group of outcast
 and homeless kids who band together for
 survival under a common identity as "T.R."
 brilliant and haunting musical score fills
 in between the club scenes, underlining
 the kid's hollow and frustrating everyday
 existence. SUBURBIA is a chilling por-
 trayal of the "blank generation", all the
 more disturbing as it reflects a trend
 that is growing, not isolated.
 ...Keith A. Gordon

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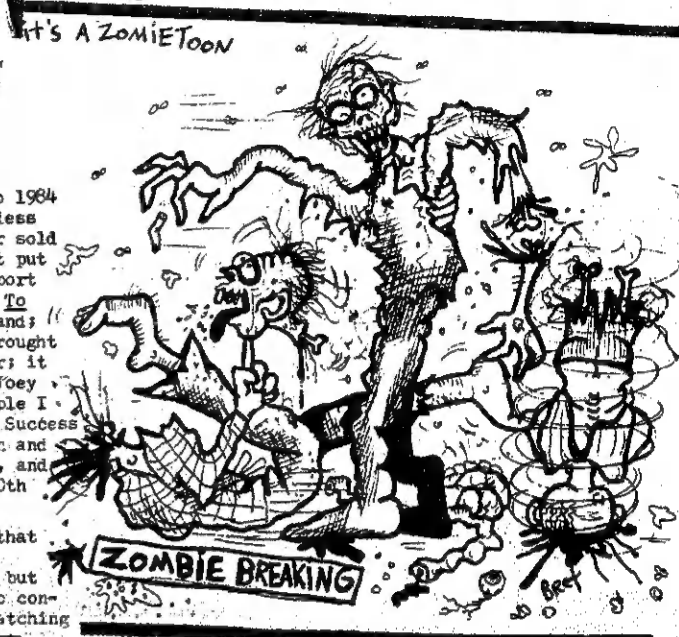
The Ramones Keep It Beatin'

It's hard to believe that it's been ten years since the RAMONES first slinked out of Forest Hills, New York and began bashing away at a dump on the Bowery named CBGB's. Think about it- 1974 when Led Zep, Yes, ELF, and Elton John were the bands to listen to and see and the emphasis was on technical wizardry with a high tech stage show, and here are these four "punks"-all named Ramone- speeding through 15 3-cord songs in a 25 minute set, their stage outfits consisting of nothing more than torn jeans and leather jackets. The RAMONES were, and still are, ahead of their time, true revolutionaries bringing rock and roll in its purest form back for themselves and their fans.

A lot has happened in those ten years from 1974 to 1984. The RAMONES have had their high and low points, but, bless their leather-clad hearts, they never went disco, never sold out, and never changed their basic sound. They've just put out a new album, Too Tough To Die, and I'm happy to report that it's the best thing they've done since '78's Road To Ruin. The RAMONES have always been a stunning live band; seeing them in Atlanta at their November 2 & 3 shows brought that home to me again. 30 songs in little over an hour; it just takes your breath away. I spoke with Johnny and Joey afterwards (I should mention here that of the many people I have interviewed, the RAMONES are some of the nicest. Success hasn't gone to their heads; I've always found them open and more than happy to talk with the press and their fans), and here's what they had to say on the occasion of their 10th year together:

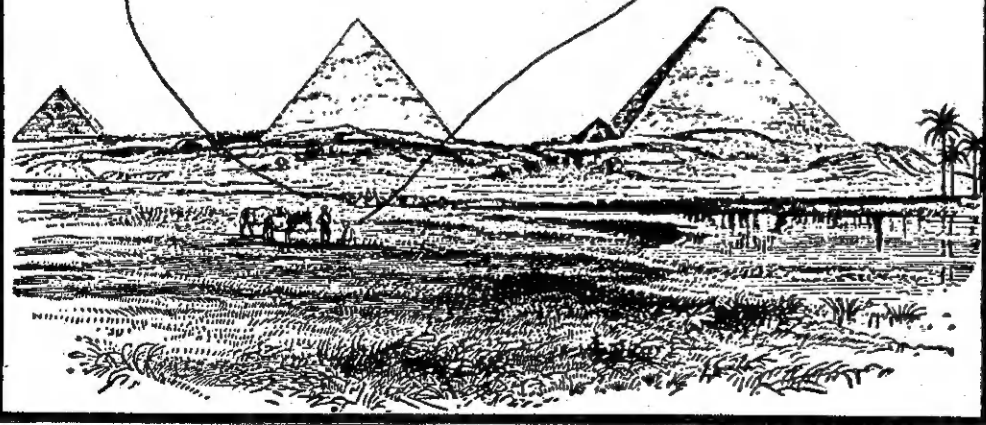
(We began by discussing the show and the stage divers that had forced a brief stop halfway through.)
JOHNNY: I don't mind them dancing out in the audience, but when they get up on stage and start giving it's hard to concentrate; you make mistakes because you've got to be watching

out for them. It's not fair to the rest of the people trying to enjoy the show...
NIR: How long will you be on tour?
JOHNNY: About seven weeks, we just got started.
NIR: What was it like working with Tommy (the Ramones' first drummer who co-produced the new LP) again?
JOHNNY: Great. I always like working with Tommy.
NIR: What do you think about how Too Tough To Die turned out?
JOHNNY: I like this one. I didn't like our last three albums but I like this one. I mean, I could still be happier about it, but it's pretty good considering everything. To be able to get back, almost, after so many albums, to what we were doing in the beginning is very hard. There's some really great stuff on it; I really love "Wart Hog" and "Endless Vacation", "Mama's Boy" and "Too Tough To Die"...
NIR: I noticed your new drummer Richie wrote one song, "Humankind", on the new LP; is he taking a more active part in the group than Marky was?
JOHNNY: Yeah. We wrote two songs, but only one made it. The other one might have been better. I voted for the other one, everybody else voted for "Humankind"...
NIR: What was the other one called?
JOHNNY: I don't remember. I can't even remember the ones I wrote that didn't make it.
NIR: Dave Stewart of the Eurythmics produced the first single from the album, "Roxanne At The Moon (Sha La La)". How did you catch synth-singer Dave? I was wondering how it was like...
JOHNNY: Dave Stewart... I don't like his band...
NIR: Interesting; what's Paul Spector like?
JOHNNY: Never missing a beat; he's an ass hole... Dave Stewart is a real nice guy. He was easy to work with. Our manager manages him, which is how it came about and we ended



meanwhile back on the Nile....

I hear there's a new band in town...
Yes... their debut record will be out soon on PYRAMID RECORDS.
...makes sense to me.



NIR: What do you think of the hardcore scene?
JOHNNY: It's nice, I guess, but I don't know...
NIR: Well, what do you listen to when you're at home?
JOHNNY: I don't listen to music. I mean, I get records, but mainly just to have around the house in case anyone else wants to hear them. I just follow sports and films, that's about it. The Cubs and the Yankees... I don't know, it's like it's your job, and when you get away you want to get into something else besides the music world.
NIR: What's your favorite movie of this year?
JOHNNY: I think The Evil Dead came out this year; that's the best thing I've seen this year. It was top of the line. In the past couple of years The Road Warrior and Raiders Of The Lost Ark have been my favorites.
NIR: Something I've been curious about in the sessions the last did with Rustie Jones before Subterranean Jungle came out... was that just a rumor, or did it happen?
JOHNNY: Not really. I didn't do anything with him. Well, somebody told me that a track from those sessions, "Chinese Food", ended up on some obscure movie's soundtrack...
JOHNNY: I don't even know if I'm on it. I don't think I am. I lost interest in the whole project early on, and I didn't bother going any more. If I don't feel like the music is what I believe the Ramones should be doing, then I'd rather not have anything to do with it. Like I didn't want to do "Baby I Love You", so I didn't play on that. I wasn't going to play with any violins.
NIR: Was anybody other than Joey on that cut?
JOHNNY: I think Marky may have been on it... No, he wasn't on it; Joey was the only one on it. Marky didn't want to play with violins either... The Ramones should be doing a certain type of thing, and sometimes we stray off of it, but at least eight songs on this new record are what I think we should be doing.
NIR: Are there any plans to release a live album for America?
JOHNNY: We'd like to, but it ain't up to us; it's up to the record company.
NIR: You just resigned with Sire, right?
JOHNNY: Yeah. We signed for three albums, and this is the first one of the three.
NIR: Having just celebrated your tenth anniversary together, are you looking forward to ten more years together?
JOHNNY: No, no, no, no. If we're lucky, two more albums. I'd rather quit doing it before we start to slip. I mean, we've slipped on a few records, but the live show's still got it. It's just time to get out at a certain point. I guess I'd like to try to finish the rest of the contract up, do the two more albums, and then get out. Hopefully we'll make it through those two. I enjoy getting up there and playing for our fans, but that's the only part I like anymore; I don't like doing the rest. I mean, this is fun right now, but the traveling all day, staying in hotel rooms... I'd rather be at home with all my things.
(Kontagienick, the road manager, signals time to go, and Johnny goes. Later that night at their hotel, Joey and Richie debate going into the hotel's ballroom to hear the cover band playing there. Joey says they sound pretty bad and it might be good for a few laughs. Richie says they're not that bad. They wander into the hotel bar and strike up a conversation with the bartender. Slowly the other patrons trickle out. Says one to me, "God, those boys are weird!", and I smile to myself and think, "yeah, but can they play rock and roll". Thanks, guys, for ten years of great sounds.)
ANDY

REVIEWS (?)

by Allen Sullivant

Hello again. Record releases during the Christmas season and the month of January are not very plentiful. And, since I decided to spare you the agony of reading another year-end retrospective of the best and/or worst of 1984, I suppose that this installment of dimwit amateur criticism will be a bit shorter than I would like for it to be. Hope you don't mind. Also, in view of the almost total lack of death threats, anonymous mid-nite telephone calls, and other forms of negative reaction to my last column, I must assume that everyone who bothers to read this agrees completely with what they read before. Thank you for your support. Enjoy your reading--more to come in the next issue...

BRONSKI BEAT----"THE AGE OF CONSENT"-----

I picked up a copy of this record after noticing in Billboard and other trade magazines that it appeared on just about every chart I saw, especially those from Europe. So much for public opinion. "The Age of Consent" is a ridiculous combination of brass laden nuevo-wavo pop and 1930's style cabaret music, all performed from and for the now ever-popular homosexual point of view. One of the worst albums I have ever heard both in content and performance. Rolling Stone will probably give it four stars. I give it an "F"---and that's being generous.

THE WATERBOYS----"A PAGAN PLACE"-----

Dexy's Midnight Runners meets Chicago in the Imperial Bedroom. An interesting concept, but no mv musical cup of tea. This lyrically superior album has gotten good reviews elsewhere... you may like it....."B"

BRONSKI BEAT----"THE AGE OF CONSENT"-----

I couldn't let this turkey slide by without mentioning that the lead vocalist sounds exactly like Mickey Dolenz on helium. It really makes me wonder just what the major labels are all about when I hear a record as horrid as this one. I know so many talented people deserving of the opportunity that these clowns are getting.

THE KINKS----"WORD OF MOUTH"-----

Thank God for the Kinks!! Ray and Dave Davies and company prove without a doubt that just because you've been around a while you don't have to turn into boring old farts like the Rolling Stones. "Word of Mouth" mixes in-your-face rockers like "Do It Again", "guilty", and the title track with plaintive, almost mournful songs like "Good Day" and "Missing Persons". Also present are examples of that old Kinks tradition of ripping off both their own (Come Dancing) and others (Start Me Up by the boring old farts) songs. This album is just what the doctor ordered to help you shake the winter doldrums and get your blood flowing again...."A"

KENDRA SMITH, DAVID ROBACK, KEITH MITCHELL-----"FELL FROM THE SUN"-----

A nice four song EP from three prominent members of Los Angeles' "paisley underground" that can rightly be termed a "winter" equivalent of last year's "Rainy Day" compilation album, both in terms of style and execution as compared to the breezy atmosphere of it's predecessor. Mellow and dreamy, without the usual weirdness associated with psychedelic music. Definately not for the hardcore or heavy metal sets. I believe that this record was originally intended for release under the group name "Clay Allison". Further Trivia (for those who care): Clay Allison was a real life old west psychopathic killer-gunfighter who was born and raised in Tennessee. See there--you learned something in spite of yourself...."B"

DEL-LORDS----"FRONTIER DAYS"-----

Bright, raw, hook-laden roots rock (neo-rockabilly?) that anybody could and should like. Musically, the Del-Lords remind me of local hero Will Rambeaux and his Delta Hurricanes, but the lyrics are closer to Springsteen than Cajun with their concern for the plight of the ordinary guy. The straight-ahead production emphasizes vocal harmonies of near Beach Boy perfection. An excellent debut....."A-"

THE TEXTONES----"MIDNIGHT MISSION"-----

This debut album from the veteran Los Angeles group is very O.K.---not the worst I've ever heard, but not the best either. The lyrics seem to dwell on the effects of the apathetic society at large on the individual---the old "I'll-get-through-this-somewhat" syndrome. While I have no problem with the lyrics as such (or with the musicianship or quality of the recording itself, for that matter), do find myself annoyed by vocalist Carla Olson. Her voice has a tendency to drift off into a Buffy Saint-Marie type of falsetto that absolutely drives me up the walls...."B-"

HOODOO GURUS----"STONEAGE ROMEOS"-----

This is a fun record. After all, what else can you expect from a band that includes as an influence the "Get Smart" TV series and writes songs about kamikaze pilots (Tojo) and exhuming old dead girlfriends (Dig It Up). "Stoneage Romeos" boasts good playin', good singin', and good sound quality. It also consists almost entirely of songs that seem somehow overly familiar. "I Want You Back" is the only inspired bit of song-craft on the whole record. However, don't let this hold you back. Buy a copy and enjoy...."A-"

P.S. There's a neat drawing of a dinosaur (probably a T-Rex) on the cover if you're impressed with that sort of thing.

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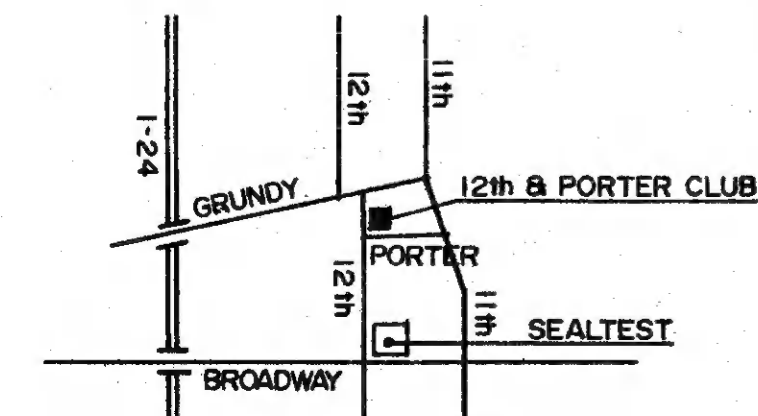
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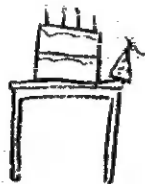
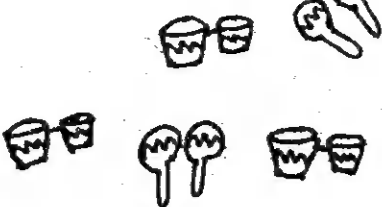
The cassette revolution is exploding the teenage underground into passionate revolt against the corporate ogre.

Beat Happening



BREAK THE CHAINS

Beat Happening is on the rampage. This December saw the release of their debut 7" 45 "Our Secret"/"What's Important". So far the response has been a universal thumbs-up, and they're selling like hot cakes. A 10 song Beat Happening cassette is in the works, due out in March. The Beat Happening song "Christmas" will be included on the cassette compilation *Horrible Heffalump* (along with the Melvins, Volume III, Liquid Generation and others) available in mid-February from Kurt Flansburg. (605 2nd St. S.E., Puyallup, WA 98371). Beat Happening live, a "liberating, chain-breaking explosion" (often abbreviated to "awesome") will be occurring in your town soon. If not, we'll know the reason why. Now, don't let all this frenetic activity overshadow Beat Happening's *Three Tea Breakfast* cassette, five songs recorded in various Tokyo apartments. Yes, this precious gem is still available for only \$2.50 postage-paid. SPECIAL OFFER: Get both the Beat Happening 7" 45 "Our Secret"/"What's Important" and the *Three Tea Breakfast* cassette for only \$3.50, ppd. A bargain at half the price!



LET'S TOGETHER

17 band international compilation featuring hardcore, noise, folk-rock, pop, and dance party instrumentals from Arizona, Nevada, Tokyo, and various small towns in Washington. (45 mins., \$4.00)

JOHN FOSTER'S POP PHILOSOPHERS

Naive white soul by Olympia's reclusive genius non-musician and a varying bunch of trusty instrument-playing neighbors. Includes his legendary "Kennedy Saga." (60 mins., \$3.50)

BEAT HAPPENING *Three Tea Breakfast*

5 folk-punk songs recorded in their swingin' pad while on a recent sojourn to Tokyo. (\$2.50)

DANGER IS THEIR BUSINESS

A bunch of people singing by themselves with no instruments. "Sets music back 10,000 years"—Truly Needy coming soon: *Dangerous Business International*. (\$3.50)

All prices include postage

Box 7154, Olympia, Wash. 98507 U.S.A.



The Sound of Pig Music has an ongoing series of compilation cassettes, for which they are always looking for material. They have released three so far (the second, *Pursuit of Happiness*, included the Beat Happening song "fourteen"), with plans for an infinite number in the future, so it's never too late for you to submit something (T.S.O.P.M., 33-28 148th St, Flushing, N.Y. 11354)

NASHVILLE INTELLIGENCE REPORT

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WRITE US!

REVIEWS

10,000 MANIACS--*Human Conflict Number Five* (EP); *Secrets Of The I-Ching* (LP) (FRESH Records; 432 Moreland Avenue NE, Atlanta, GA 30307)--Don't be fooled by their name; 10,000 MANIACS are not a hardcore band. Far from it. What they are is hard to describe, though. Pop? Sure. Minimalist? Sorta. Best new group of 1984? Undoubtedly. This bunch of upstate New Yorkers (since transplanted to Athens, GA) have come up with a highly unique sound and approach, better experienced than read about. Lead vocalist Natalie Merchant has one of the best voices I've ever heard (very European sounding) that the rest of the band's playing revolves around and accentuates. Natalie sings like a siren's siren, so you can't always hear out the lyrics, but when you can they'll send shivers down your spine. Take, for example, "Grey Victory", a pleasant enough light tune until you realize it's about the coming of Hiroshima. In "Tension" Natalie observes "Passion edition: God sent comfort is your salvation" then asks "but who wants absolution for sins that never were committed?". Her sense is amazing; on "Orange" she hits and stays on high notes in a manner that'll take your breath away. There's a lot going on behind her voice too; Robert Buck's guitar treatments are some of the best since Adrian Belew's, and John Lombardo takes over the vocal chores for the reggae-feeling "Anthem For Doomed Youth". Both of the 10,000 Maniacs' releases are well worth your owning; the LP has lyrics, the EP doesn't. A big thank you to Fresh Records for putting these discs back into print after the group's original private pressings quickly sold out. -ANDY

MADE IN AMERICA

Los Lobos
HOW WILL THE WOLF SURVIVE? (Slash)
The Textones
MIDNIGHT MISSION (A & M)
The Minutemen
DOUBLE NICKELS ON THE DIME (SST)

In case you haven't noticed it yet, all us here at NIR to let you in on a secret: there's a new wind blowing in Rock music these days. It's exciting, original and refreshing...and it's stamped indelibly "Made In America". It's typified by bands like the critic's darlings from Athens, REM, and by our own hometown faves, Jason & The Scorchers. And it is represented accurately by these three albums from Los Lobos, The Textones and The Minutemen.

Los Lobos have become the new favorites of the critical set, and for good reason. Rolling Stone Magazine's recent Critic's Poll showed that Los Lobos took honors as the Best New Artist (over runner-ups Cyndi Lauper and The Bangles) and tied Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band as Band Of The Year. HOW WILL THE WOLF SURVIVE? earns the compliments. A highly-spirited mix of rock, R & B and honky-tonk country are tossed together with a heaping helping of Tex-Mex stylings to create a hot, though unique hybrid. The music of Los Lobos reflects their proud Mexican/American heritage. It is also highly danceable, non-stop rockin' & boppin'...unlike the artificial technopop that passes for the real thing in some quarters. HOW WILL THE WOLF SURVIVE? is an energetic rock 'n' roll vehicle, a low riding hot rod with a brand new tri-duce carb, ready to roll.

The Textones are a Los Angeles band that aspire towards a singer/songwriter sensibility of style. These are the children of the Middle Class, but rather than reflect the blandness of an entire cliched L.A. genre, The Textones rise above such generic claptrap, embodying instead a sort of "Angry Young Man" feel to their material, similar to Elvis Costello or Graham Parker, with one very noticeable difference...

...singer/songwriter/guitarist Carla Olson is an angry young woman. When Olson is at her best, such as on

MIDNIGHT MISSION's title cut (which, to paraphrase Springsteen, is a song about "those people that the trickle down theory hasn't trickled down to yet"); "Number One Is To Survive"; and the covers, "Running" (originally done by Chubby Checkers as a comeback single a few years back) or "Clean Cut Kid" (an unreleased Dylan song), a tribute to a lost Viet Nam vet (and indeed, all Nam vets)...she is exceptional. The music is traditional R & B influenced rock. Olson's vocals dynamic and her songwriting fraught with potential.

If indeed punk was a response to the boring and mind-decaying commerciality of mid-seventies' rock; and hard-core a step beyond the exaggeration and discordance of the punk genre, then The Minutemen from San Pedro, California (where else?) have brought the journey full-circle with their amazing double album set, DOUBLE NICKELS ON THE DIME. At first glance, you'll find forty-five songs averaging a mere ninety seconds each; scratch below the surface, though and discover the underlying complexity, wit, confusion politicizing and idealism inherent in The Minutemen's music. The material here encompasses the full spectrum of rock, jazz, hard-core and minimalistic influences in creating an ethereal philosophy, poetry set to music. The band hits every bulls-eye it aims for, from the possible ego-inflation of media coverage ("Political Song For Michael Jackson To Sing") to political and social atrocities ("Untitled Song For Latin America") to mindless conformity. With a sharp eye and a sound mind, The Minutemen have become an important force in the American underground.

Yes, there's a new wind blowing in Rock music, one that speaks for the true majority of this country's people, not the falsely-mandated, filthy-rich moral hypocrites of Reagan's Amerika. A voice of angry young rebels, from the ethnic folk creations of Los Lobos to The Textones' tales of the working man to The Minutemen's social and political philosophies; musical spokespeople for those who have been cast out and ignored by the "Brave New World" of the eighties. Can you hear it?

...Keith A. Gordon

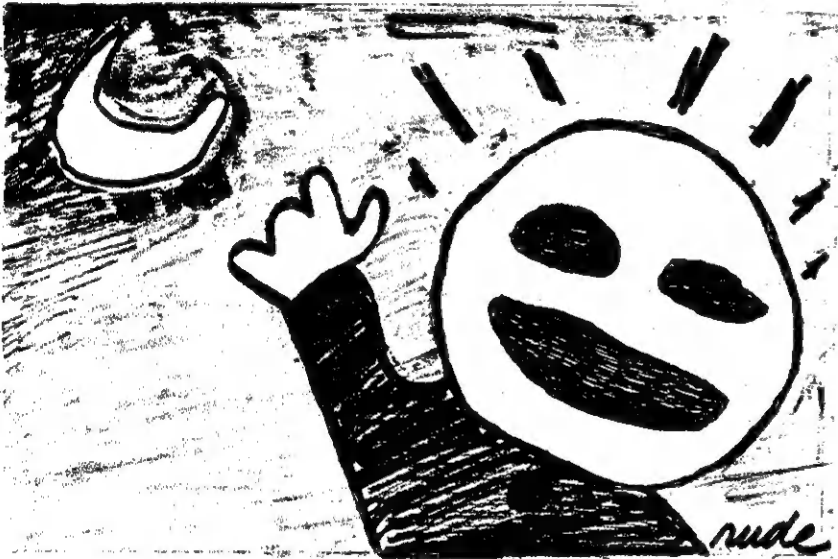
SNIDE-O-RAMA

Greetings, fellow smarties. I, Hugh N. Cry, do so hope everyone enjoys this, the first, and likely last, Snide-O-Rama. Thanks to the Thin Men and especially Number Thirteen. Snide I am, and bought and paid for is this page, but thanks to N. I. R. for the space. Some of this really needed to be said.

COMPELLING NEW WORK by Clearly Erroneous

Old Dominion Genealogical Services presents "Nashville: A Painting Retrospective." Area art may be seen daily at the Hoitentoit Downtowner.

Generations of local dabbling create an historic panorama amid the ferns of the Vertigo Room. From cunning two-dimensional still lifes to mellow sixties style abstractions to the cheap paints, primary colors, and absence of detail of our young exuberants; its all here. Still going strong is last year's trend toward bold clumping of staples on frameless (but honest) stretchers backed with costly board du card. Casually rippled canvases and decisive mat overcuts tell the discerning that this show is decidedly "Nashville."



Art-goers will appreciate this novel touch—whine and cheese as a respite for the famished and a dearth of ashtrays for those who smoke.

Mind you, I haven't seen the show myself, actually seeing the art I review strikes me as vulgar and unnecessary. What I enjoy most about art in this area is my arbitrary position of power; and besides, knowledge could sully my perspective.

Be sure to look for the next Erroneous report in which I shamelessly paraphrase nearly everyone in retelling the experiences of a busload of monied boors on a New York theatre junket.

Coming soon: Facial Ridges attempts to justify drama, writing about it, and his existence.

LEAGUE LUNCHEON WEDNESDAY By Clearly Erroneous

Grating Nashvillians embark on a new tradition Wednesday. That ever static guild of Nashville artists, the Volunteer Nepotism League, have a two o'clock organizer hostessed by Gusheon Flirt to plan the first Annual Backslappers Ball, according to League president, Society Tagalong.

"Opportunity in Art for the Right People" will be the ball's theme. Mrs. Tagalong told me today that the theme is appropriate because "The V. N. L. has always tried to attract attention to itself in order to stay amid the smart set and to enable us to showcase our sons, daughters, and cronies."

Rude Boy will provide decorations for the gala and somber woodwinds by the Gladhanders will liven a breakfast after a night of dancing abandon sparked by a thin, reedy orchestra.

In keeping with League tradition, invitations will be extended, as usual, only to the quintessential crew of arts-n-crafts dilettantes and painters who emulate the finest trends of the nineteenth century along with a sprinkling of vivacious sophisticates.

Those wishing to cling to social position will be sure to attend.

OPINIONS IMMACULATE By Hugh N. Cry

Why hasn't New Order been deified? Lionel Richie crucified? I want the first Raging Fire LP.* Children of Noise are still and should be.* When I wake up will Springsteen be gone? Definition: Pop: music of the day, Enjoyed, then thrown away. Be strong. Throw out your Ultravox, your XTC, your English Beat, your Talk Talk and toss them out with joy.* Imagine My Embarrassment Department-heard a good album and it turned out to be the Romantics.* Thanks to Metro for plowing my car under the snow.* Thanks to the mayor for a needless convention center.* Someone get Keith Levine here—I will buy a ticket and go.* A clean, warm, dry place to hear music sounds simple to me.* Make an effort to listen to old Stones' records whenever possible.* A pox on Sammy Hagar.* Read Aztec.* Read The Book of the New Sun.* Do not be all you can be, for no one likes coffee achievers.* REM is best because their finger is on the pulse of the nation and yea, verily, that pulse is rock and roll.

Raise a hue and cry
if you enjoyed this bit of snide.

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the band that just won't go away...

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